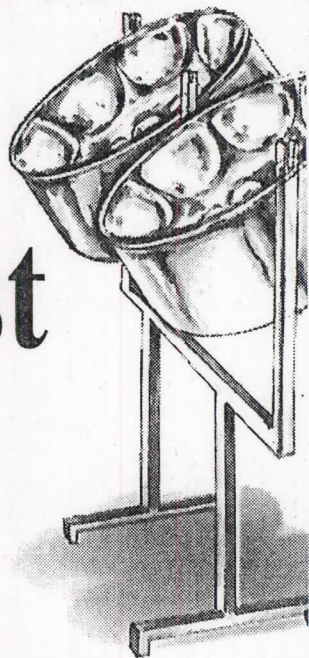


Curtis Pierre: Give the judges a rest

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WE ARE BEING subjected to the same set of values over the years from a set of Panorama adjudicators who must by now be tired, said Curtis Pierre, himself a former judge.

"There is a kind of sameness in the results and this cannot be good for bands who keep trying all kinds of new things only to find that the same set of bands share top honours year after year.

"This is not an indictment of their abilities," insists Pierre, "but it is easy to understand why the same set of people judging, whether it be cars or coconut water or pan over a number of years, would keep coming up with the same kind of results.

"In any event, Panorama should use a larger number of judges because there are various styles of arrangement and the tonal qualities of the instruments differ.

"It would be unfair to simply have the same panel until eternity because arrangers and music people in general will begin to believe that their own musical judgment was slipping if the choices being made by the judges are predictable."

Pierre, who has been a judge of Panorama for many years, has a few words about the audiences too.

"The way the thing has evolved, you will find that more than 80 per cent of the people in the stands cannot spell Sforzata or Scherzando and more than half of those may not be able to spell Phase II. They just go to jam during the DJ play and some actually turn their backs when the steelbands play.

"This is after the players have worked for weeks on their songs. Perhaps it also has to do with the fact that they know which of five bands is going to win anyway, so they do not care.

"It is the perception that Panorama is just a large party and nothing else. It may be the way to keep the revenue up, but we may be losing the value of the music in such an equation.

"What we're doing here is having the preliminaries of a music competition in a fete. The famous names in the pan world can be the only people who will benefit from this arrangement."

But back to the judges.

"Every judge should be supplied with a tape recording of all the songs that will be played in the competition well in advance of the first night of the preliminaries.

"It must be unfair to any judge who has not heard *Pan in a Volcano*, to be asked to consider it at the same level of jurisprudence as another who has heard the song a hundred times.

"As a consequence, this is also unfair to the steelband people who compose songs especially for the instrument and then add lyrics that they feel will make the work popular."

Broadening his responses to questions from the *Express*, Pierre said he would like to see a prize awarded to the band that has the best impact on the crowd, regardless of that band's size or category.

"I certainly remember a pan-round-the-neck band some years ago being the talk of

the entire Panorama. And in last year's competition, one of the bands that stays in my mind is Nutones, with their arrangement and execution of Peter Lewis' "No Sleep".

"Such bands should be rewarded for their attempts to beat the top five, particularly in the face of the comments I have made before."

An overall view of the value of Panorama, however, met with a swift: "Don't get me wrong, we must keep Panorama on the annual calendar until we could come up with something to replace it — something that will ensure the same level of patronage and improve the quality of their appreciation.

"But don't throw out Panorama while we're shopping around... please," he concluded.